

The People's Choice

2016 Regional Council Policy Document

Environment Policy

Clean water and swimmable rivers

We believe clean freshwater is vital to thriving Canterbury communities and wish to see Canterbury as a leader in sustainable land use.

- We want swimmable rivers and to reverse the decline in water quality
- A People's Choice-led ECan will work with the City Council to research and seek solutions to diminished ground water levels in the Christchurch City

Boosting compliance and monitoring

We believe in a level playing field for farmers. Those who are working towards sustainable farming practices should be encouraged. Those who are regularly flouting the rules should face consequences.

- We will audit our present monitoring and compliance systems to ensure they are fair and robust.
- We will take firmer and more rapid enforcement action on non-compliance
- We want to reward sustainable farming and business practices that demonstrate exceptional environmental care and facilitate the sharing of this knowledge.

Protecting and restoring native habitat and landscapes

Biological diversity and ecosystem health are vital to our wellbeing.

- We undertake to vigorously retain and protect what we have, restore what is lost and arrest further decline
- We seek a comprehensive assessment of regional externalities (including the cost of environmental repair and restoration) to inform regional reporting and decision making

Building resilience to climate change and improve air quality

We will work to build our resilience to climate disruption that will impact the livelihoods and wellbeing of Cantabrians

- At ECan, we propose the establishment of a Climate Change Unit comprising senior managers from across the organisation to identify risks and put in place processes to deal with climate change and related emergencies such as pests, floods, droughts, wind and storms
- Improve air quality through robust monitoring and reporting and incentives to reduce harmful emissions

- We recognise the role of the City Council in working with agencies in both central and local government to develop strategies for minimising, mitigating, and adapting to the effects of climate change.

Exercising kaitiakitanga and achieving genuine wellbeing

We will focus on achieving genuine wellbeing for all Cantabrians where intergenerational stewardship is at the core of our communities

- We will strengthen ECan's educational programmes that enhance citizen's understanding of healthy ecosystems and how they contribute to our wellbeing
- We will continue to work in partnership with Ngāi Tahu to enhance the mauri of our environment

Transport and Land Use

Developing a one-network, connected, accessible and affordable transport system with priority for public transport and active travel.

Make sure every kid can walk or bike safely to their nearest school.

The People's Choice is committed to a modern, accessible, and affordable transport system for Christchurch.

Land use and transport are tightly connected, and smart decisions here will enable Christchurch and the Peninsula to thrive. A People's Choice Council will support well-designed appropriate developments of land use around core transport corridors, and facilitate mixed-use developments that create walkable communities.

To improve our public transport system, we will pursue a fast, frequent, accessible, and reliable low carbon public transport system that more people, including those with disabilities, want and are able to use.

Christchurch's transport system needs to be seen as one network, across road, rail, and sea, across public transport, active modes, and private cars. It's all connected, and there needs to be a strategic approach to all components. Across ECan and the City Council, we will:

- work with our partners in local and central government to develop a single, accountable lead agency to adopt a strategic approach to transport planning and management.
- Invest in infrastructure to improve the public transport experience, including improving bus routes, frequency and reliability by implementing bus priority measures
- Investigate including free wifi on buses.

The People's Choice is committed to promoting a more walking and cycle-friendly city. Modal shift will reduce the stress on our roading network, increase resilience, reduce congestion, cut carbon emissions, and improve quality of life. A People's Choice City Council will:

- Continue leading the implementation of the Major Cycle Ways programme in a timely fashion
- adopt a "Vision Zero" strategy to eliminate deaths on the Christchurch transport network
- Invest in measures to make residential streets and intersections safe for all users including pedestrians and cyclists.
- Get heavy freight trucks off Christchurch's streets by working with transport agencies and infrastructure companies to develop distribution hubs
- Enable the uptake of low emission vehicles including a shared electric car fleet and the use of new technology in all our transport systems.
- develop and implement a strategy, with funding attached, to make sure every child can walk or bike safely to their nearest school by 2026.

Community Development and Democracy

Continuing to support community development

The People's Choice will work to empower Community Boards. We recognise that different communities have different aspirations, different capacities, and different needs, and so we'll adopt a process for delegating further powers to Community Boards, which is led by the Community Boards.

The People's Choice will continue to support community development through Council and Community Board funding, including the small rural communities of Banks Peninsula, and through investment in the Canterbury Water Management Strategy Zone Committee processes.

We believe full democracy at Environment Canterbury is fundamental to ensuring Cantabrians desires are represented and realised. We will

- support a return to a democratically elected regional council, at the earliest opportunity
- ensure that the post-2019 ECan governance structure embodies the Treaty of Waitangi partnership
- support the work of the Zone Committees in working to improve environmental outcomes
- continue to work in partnership with Ngāi Tahu to enhance the mauri of our environment

Council Finances

Financial responsibility, a realistic capital works programme, and keeping our strategic assets

The People's Choice takes seriously our role as caretakers of the council finances. We recognise that both Councils face tough decisions around rates, assets, and capital investment, and we are committed to prudent, long-term financial management which protects the interests of ratepayers, not just now but into the future.

The People's Choice does not see asset sales as a prudent response to short-term financial difficulties. Asset sales simply shift the problem onto future ratepayers, degrade financial resilience, and weaken the Councils' strategic decision making abilities.

- The People's Choice will implement a realistic capital works programme which recognises the practical limits of what can be built and when.
- Central government has an on-going responsibility to meet the commitments it has made towards the rebuild. People's Choice Councils will work constructively but firmly with the Government to ensure that both Councils and central government respect those commitments.
- We think it's important that Councils raise money fairly, with those who can afford to contribute more doing so. We'll keep flat fees which hit those on lower and fixed incomes down, and keep user charges low.